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C O N T E N T S

An Issue on the Community School

Editorial Foreword	142
Crisis in School-Community Policy	143
Court Cases Regarding School Consolidation	146
The School in the Community, by Howard Y. McClusky	149
Public Relations for Public Schools, by J. H. Hull	153
Validity of the Basic Arguments for Consolidation, by T. A. Gantz ...	154
What Is a Good Community Primary School Like?	158
Community Headquarters, by Hazel Moss Duncan	158
Basic Issues in School Consolidation	161
School Consolidation Policy in Massachusetts	166
Report of the Tenth Annual Conference on the Small Community, June 29-July 1, 1953	167
Correspondence	171
News Notes, Meetings and Conferences	172

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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

The subject of this issue of *Community Service News*—school-community relationships—has been brewing for several years. Some major social forces have been dangerously despoiling the community, the temporarily forgotten foundation of human society. Growing concern with the attrition of the community has brought the community school ever more into the forefront of attention.

Until now we have held off giving school-community relationships intensive treatment because we had not accumulated and put in order sufficient evidence and weight of authoritative opinion to develop a clear picture of what has happened and what can be done.

This issue of *Community Service News* is the result of the concern and work of many people—school superintendents, school board members, ministers, parents, high school students, physicians, rural sociologists, rural journalists, and heads of university education departments, many of them visitors at Community Service, who have expressed concern, sent in clippings, reported their observations or reported the experience of others. We hope we have done justice to these people and their concern for children, school and community.

We have limited discussion in this issue to two major aspects of the problem: the size and nature of the community school, and democratic participation and control in relation to the state. A third major aspect of the matter, only mentioned here, must await treatment in a later issue: how shall school *districts*, as compared with schools, be amalgamated, organized, federated and governed? How large should school districts be? There seems to be general agreement that some form and degree of consolidation, federation, centralization or sharing of services is necessary, but that experimentation with the wide variety of forms now prevalent over the country is required to determine which will be best suited to particular situations and regions, and which are most effective educationally, economically and in democratic control and participation. Through such affiliation of districts, smaller schools can have the benefit of specialized services, personnel, and equipment heretofore available only to large schools.

Community Service News, issued bimonthly except July and August by Community Service, Inc., Yellow Springs, Ohio. \$2.00 per year, two years \$3.00. Griscom Morgan, editor.

Community Service, Inc., is an organization to promote the interests of the community as a basic social institution, concerned with the economic, recreational, educational, cultural and spiritual development of its members. Community Service was incorporated in 1940 as a non-profit organization to supply information and service for small communities and their leaders, in the belief that the decay of the American community constitutes a crisis which calls for steady and creative effort. The nation-wide interest expressed during the succeeding years has reinforced this opinion.

CRISIS IN SCHOOL-COMMUNITY POLICY

The present dominant emphasis of many American state departments of education, which has prevailed for generations, has been toward centralization of power and authority and minimizing the role and self-determination of local communities. Although county and state department officials sometimes disclaim this policy, their conduct in many states is testimony that the policy is still what it was stated as being seventeen years ago in a U.S. Bureau of Education publication by D. H. Sutton of the Ohio State Department of Education:

Education is now and always has been regarded as the proper function of the state. . . . It cannot be argued that school districts possess any inherent rights or prerogatives. . . . Of course, in the reorganization of school districts, the control exercised by the state is limited by reason of the type and kind of coercion it is able to apply in developing a school finance program.

The fact that some state departments were until recently limited to this one powerful form of coercion is one of many evidences that the legislatures did not intend that the state departments should have the authority claimed for them. These departments have sought, generally in vain, for legislation to give them blanket powers. By their persistence, they occasionally catch the public napping and get the legislation they seek.

The financial help for rural schools that is administered by the state department was for the purpose of equalizing educational opportunity, not as a club to be used for centralizing schools. Rural people bear the lion's share of bringing up and educating the nation's youth. Cities almost never have enough children to maintain their own population, but are largely populated by young people born and educated in rural communities. It is only fair and wise that the cities should share in the support of that education upon which the cities so largely depend. But it does not follow therefrom that the state should dictate the educational policies and program of rural areas.

It is generally recognized that federal aid for schools must vigilantly provide against federal domination. The same principle needs to apply on the state level. The essence of democracy is that, so far as is practicable, controls should remain as close as possible to the people affected. The essence of bureaucracy and of totalitarianism is that power and authority are removed from the people directly affected, and concentrated in a bureaucracy at the top. Every bureaucracy craves more power, and constantly seeks to enlarge and intrench itself. This is as true of the Army, the Recla-

mation Service, the Agricultural Extension Service, and of private bureaucracies of large corporations, as it is of state departments of education. In its craving for more power, bureaucracy never sleeps. It is primarily for this reason that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

In opposition to the encroachment of the departments of education on the self-direction of local schools and communities, organizations have been developing spontaneously and independently, and legal actions have been taken to safeguard the local community and school district. In Ohio a state-wide organization has been formed to unite local and county groups to that end. This Ohio Community Schools Association is not opposed to all reorganizations or consolidation, and is not trying to stop change and progress in educational policies. It is striving to keep democracy and local initiative in education and to overcome the growing control over rural education by a bureaucratic organization ruling in the name of the state and using authoritarian means to gain its ends. In Wisconsin, "The Wisconsin Rural Schools Association," which reports affiliation of over 1500 rural school districts, is not opposed to all reorganization, but it resents the disintegration of rural community life which has followed the closing of many small schools throughout the state. And it insists that decision to close or consolidate schools should be democratically determined by the ballot.

State departments of education defend their policies and seek to persuade the public by asserting that the well-being of the children depends upon acquiescence to their authority. In the drive toward further consolidating schools that were themselves consolidated a generation or two ago they have failed to take into consideration values which educators and the public are increasingly emphasizing today. Administered by specialists in educational administration, many state departments of education are sadly behind the times in their sociology. Through big buildings and heavy bond issues they are freezing the country in a social pattern that is obsolete. Maurice Seay, chairman of the department of education of the University of Chicago, recently wrote in a leading journal for school administrators:

Reorganization may lead to the development of a school with a very large enrollment but with no sense of community belonging, a school with great emphasis on subject matter but with no consciousness of the relation of subject matter to real problems, a school with diversification in program but with little concern for general education . . . a school that is emotional over the role of community life but actually sees this role as a nostalgic exercise.

To promote the development of community schools, a consolidation program should apply . . . which would assure a local community for each school.

Advocates of school consolidation have frequently rested their case upon the fact that a large school can offer a greatly diversified program. Today this is not so convincing an argument as it used to be, for we now believe that greater emphasis should be placed on general education for all and that there should be less specialization until completion of secondary education. . . . Let us not allow over-enthusiasm for school consolidation to deprive us of the power for revitalizing our communities that is inherent in the community school.

So important is the role of the school in the community as viewed by leading rural educators of today that William McKinley Robinson, director of the Department of Rural Life and Education at Western Michigan College of Education, asserts: "To bungle the organization of schools—the elementary school being generally the most dynamic force for unity in rural neighborhoods and the high schools being the same in rural communities—is to jeopardize the future of the small community."

This rapidly increasing outlook on the importance of the community in present-day thinking about educational policy is shared by educational administrators as well as by professors of education. The recent yearbook, *Schools for a New World*, of the American Association of School Administrators, states that:

If our civilization endures it will be because community becomes both a primary and a functional entity in itself. The local community has been well described by Arthur E. Morgan as "the seed bed of society." It is here that a pattern of human relationships outside of the home . . . takes form. It is here, or not at all, that social integration begins. . . . The improvement of American life begins by strengthening it at the community level. . . . Let each of us get clearly in mind that if a better world is to be built it must be built through vigorous positive action in your little corner [or community or neighborhood] and my little corner. . . . It is that feeling that what can be done in little corners does not matter which constitutes the greatest threat to civilization—a threat even greater than that of the atomic bomb.

The citizens over the state of Ohio who are now organizing to keep alive the initiative and freedom and well-being in their local communities are doing one of the most important things that can be done in the modern world. They have against them one of the most powerful bureaucracies in the nation, one known to use its power to punish both individuals and communities for disobeying its authority. It was Thomas Jefferson who wrote "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." He saw the importance of wide distribution of social control. These citizens of Ohio and other states who are protesting the centralization of educational authority are proving themselves worthy of liberty. Let us hope that they keep it.

COURT CASES REGARDING SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION

That coercion is used in forcing consolidation on local communities has been denied by state department officials. This is a question of fact in the issue of local democracy versus state bureaucracy. The question of fact has been decided in several court actions in Ohio. In view of Ohio being one of the more progressive states, with high educational standards, and with less bureaucratic domination than in a good many states, it is instructive to review court findings in a couple of Ohio counties. The situation in Ohio is not so dramatic as in some states where local citizens having no power over their schools are left to such impotent protests as burning in effigy the public officials and sending their children to school across the state line. But it is still clear and widespread.

The first case was given adequate reporting in the Logan (Hocking County), Ohio, *Daily News*. The citizens group which financed this protest were rank-and-file, competent, intelligent members of their respective communities. Characteristic is the secretary, whose wife is mother of a family of school children, as well as a first-grade teacher. We were able to attend a meeting of the group several weeks after the court decision, and found there the spirit of the men who risked their careers to sign the Declaration of Independence. As the chairman put it, "We believe the best way to prove that democracy still works is to remain free ourselves."

The Starr-Washington high school that was to be consolidated is a product of consolidation a generation ago, has a large plant, is center of a good rural village and farm community and has above average tax support. The plans for the county called for a consolidation of already consolidated rural schools, carrying some of the students through and beyond the county seat which now has a good high school with an excellent vocational—industrial and agricultural—program.

After examining both the newspaper reports and the court decision, the primary question one might raise is the division of responsibility between the county superintendent and the state department for the abuse of authority. Since the two have continued to recognize the new district despite an injunction against it, and since similar situations have appeared in other parts of the State, we may say that irrespective of the division of responsibility, the state bureaucracy as a whole leads to such abuse as that in Hocking County.

From the Logan *Daily News*, Monday, June 1, 1953:

Creation of the controversial East Hocking School District was upset today by the decision of Judge Harley Meyer in the lawsuit which attacked that merger.

His verdict climaxed the most extended civil action in the history of Hocking County courts. The trial took eight days, ending last Feb. 27.

It was brought against state, county and district school officials by a group of patrons of the East Hocking District, known as the Local Government Committee.

Judge Meyer found that:

The State Education Director, [and his aides, and the county school superintendent.] entered into a plan for reorganization of the seven local school districts in the eastern part of Hocking County—Green, Marion, Falls, Ward, Murray City, Starr-Washington and Falls-Gore—by consolidating them into one district.

That "for the purpose of minimizing opposition" to this plan it was planned "to induce each of the seven boards of said local districts to adopt a resolution recommending such reorganization."

"That to preclude protest on the part of school patrons and taxpayers of such districts," the fact that the plan was being considered "was deliberately withheld from such school patrons and taxpayers, and from the press."

In his findings of fact, Judge Meyer states:

That "actions of Eyman, Garrison and Dillon made it plain this particular merger was to be effected regardless of method, and the county school board by following their lead without independent investigation, dissemination of correct information to or consultation with their constituency made themselves party to the plan."

Judge Meyer concludes that the county board "actively participated in giving misinformation" to the seven local boards, that it was the board's duty to arrive at an honest and fair conclusion as to facts surrounding creation of the new district, but that they let state and county school officials make their decisions.

The judge states that the board accepted conclusions of state officials and the county superintendent, not as recommendations but as orders without alternative.

Testimony showed, he says, that one county board member held the state officials to be his "superiors" whose suggestions he was obliged to follow, apparently oblivious of the fact that he had but one superior, the people he was elected to serve. This witness stated further that he felt it was up to the county board to effect the merger "or else."

Action of the State High School Board in reducing the Union Furnace High School charter midway in the 30-day period allowed for remonstrance, coupled with the public warning by Mr. Eyman that a like fate awaited Murray City and Carbon Hill if they withdrew from the merger, was likewise hit by Judge Meyer.

In his opinion the action "was taken at an inopportune time if it was meant solely to foster and enforce scholastic standards." The court "will not indulge the assumption" that it was meant only to enforce standards.

"Efforts to dictate the school program under consideration reflect no credit on our State Department of Education," the judge concludes. "These efforts violated the rudimentary concept of our basic theory of government."

Among other findings, the judge states:

That to induce unanimous approval of the proposed merger, state and county school heads represented that, in districts where there were high schools, charters would be revoked or reduced if the reorganization were not effected, but would be retained at their present status if it were effected.

The same officials, he found, told certain of the districts which have no high schools that transportation costs for high school students would be prohibitive, and that through the merger such costs would be alleviated, whereas in fact "such high school students would have to continue indefinitely to attend the high schools which they had theretofore attended, and no reduction of such costs could result," and that in Marion Township the debt burden transferred to taxpayers of that district as a result of the merger "would have paid such costs for more than 20 years."

The judge also states that local boards were told the spread of the aggregate debt on the debt-free districts would be negligible, whereas in fact the merger would relieve Green Township of approximately \$120,000 of its debt and transfer it to taxpayers of other districts.

He also found that the plan called for construction of a new centrally located high school costing \$500,000, whereas in fact "statutes governing debt limitations would not have permitted such an expenditure within a foreseeable future."

In the court case of the Millcreek Local School District high school, a school charter had been summarily revoked by officials of the Ohio State Department of Education. The Common Pleas Court and Court of Appeals both have ruled in favor of the local district. The issue at stake is the kind of authority wielded by the State Department. It is the contention of the Department that: "The State Department of Education is engaged in organizing a sub-unit government as a part of the State System of Education when it charters high schools as opposed to licensing and granting a privilege to a high school." (From the brief of the State Department of Education before the Court of Appeals.)

The integrity of the school district is defended before the Supreme Court by the claim: "The appellants [the State Department officials] rely entirely upon the theory that the local Board of Education is simply a subordinate part of the State Department of Education. This contention is not supported by the decisions or the statutes of this state."

"The Ohio General Code sets forth the powers of the local board of education . . . as follows: 'The board of education of each school district shall be a body politic and corporate,' (and so on, with the rights and privileges of corporate bodies.)"

THE SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY*

By HOWARD Y. McCLUSKY, University of Michigan

Historically the school has operated apart from and above the common life of people. The explanation of this separation inheres in a combination of factors. In the first place, the traditional subject matter of instruction abounds in abstractions requiring the manipulation of words. But skill in verbal manipulation may be attained mainly by growth in a cultural climate accessible to few persons. In the second place, prolonged and intensive training has been a prerequisite to the practice of such professions as teaching, medicine, dentistry, ministry, law, etc., whose processes are beyond the grasp of most people. And in the third place, the school has been regarded as a social economic ladder by which the individual climbs away from the common condition of mankind to the upper levels of advantage. Whatever the weight or intermingling of these and other factors may be, the leaders of education have in the past tried to maintain the school as a cultural isolate sealed off from the stream of the community.

But the isolation of education is gradually yielding to superior insight into the relation of the school to society. We are finally catching up to the recognition of the unitary character of human experience and are beginning to discover the web of social relationships in which individuals and institutions are interlaced.

Let us examine a few simple illustrations. . . . A pupil is a son, nephew, brother, future farmer, and Boy Scout, his heart beats, his food digests, his lungs breathe, all at the same time. He can't be divided or cut into segments. When he goes to school, all of him goes to school. He is a unit.

Not only individuals but functions are unitary. A pupil learns English in rhetoric, botany, history, algebra, between classes, en route to school, in the corner drug store and at home. In fact the home alone is so fundamental in the acquisition of language that only by a supreme effort can the school overcome the drag of a family with low standards of language behavior. To argue, as the practice of virtually every school implies, that by studying English only in the English class a pupil is immunized against verbal influences outside the classroom is moonshine, purple and undiluted.

The most systematic confirmation of this viewpoint is contained in the organismic view of life. This view is based on two important generaliza-

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tions: First, the whole is more than the sum of the parts, and second, the part derives its meaning from the whole of which it is a part. Water is more than the sum of hydrogen and oxygen. A melody is more than the sum of the separate musical tones. An individual is more than the sum of hands, arms, feet, eyes, viscera, muscles, bones, nerves, etc. Moreover, in the case of water, hydrogen possesses a quality in combination with oxygen that it does not possess alone. In the instance of the human body, the hand derives some of its features from its attachment to the arm; the arm, in turn, is the recipient of qualities from the body, while every part of the body possesses characteristics conferred by the total organism.

In other words, we cannot understand individual or institution unless we comprehend the wholeness of its character and the manifold inter-relationships of its parts. Such is the essence of the organismic viewpoint.

While a strict interpretation of this concept may not be capable of rigid application to the relationship of the school to the community, nevertheless it does provide an illuminating frame of reference by which to understand this problem. Now we can understand why the attempt of some educators to escape the community is a monstrous mis-reading of the social scene. Now it is clear why the community invades the school in a number of guises. It may be in the person of a prominent member of the Board of Education with powerful affiliations in the community. It may occur in the person of pupils whose recital of school events at home produces an undertow of community misunderstanding. These are only a few illustrations showing the organic character of the way in which the school and the community are inter-meshed.

Society is more and more attempting to pass on to the school functions which non-school agencies formerly assumed. However, there is a distinct limit to the assignments which the school can properly undertake, not merely because of the limitations of time, energy, equipment, and personnel that would inevitably occur, but because the total educational task of society is by its nature the responsibility of the community as a whole and cannot be accepted by the school or any other single agency alone. To fasten the whole burden of education on the school is to delegate to a part of society that which only society as a whole can achieve. If the whole is more than any part, the part cannot carry the burden of the whole. Since the community comprises all the forces and agencies of an area, it is plainly impossible for the school to attempt to assume the task of the community.

This . . . does not propose that the functions which society is trying to pass on to the school are not legitimate objects of education, nor does it mean that the school should not share some responsibility for them. It merely illuminates the nature of the relationship which the school should maintain. To elaborate: The school may well be the most important single

agency in society to improve the community, but the primary function of the school should be that of helping the community to help itself. The school then becomes the instrument whereby the superior resources of the community are mobilized for self-improvement. It becomes a catalytic agent and coordinator. It would help the community discover, funnel its power into extra-school agencies. Thus the school must work *in* and *with* the community and only *for* the community when it can contribute some unique service which no other agency possesses.

Guidance is a function of the school. But it is even to a greater degree a function of the community. . . . The home exerts the greatest single influence in the life of a child. The gang is often next in order of potency. The church has an unparalleled opportunity in another sector of human experience. . . . These references to non-school agencies are not mentioned to minimize the function of the school in a guidance program. They are cited to indicate the great resources at its disposal. . . .

The prevention of juvenile delinquency is another function of the school. But even to a greater degree it, too, is a responsibility of the community. Delinquency is associated with many conditions, among which are inadequate homes, poor social and recreational opportunities, physical defects, certain personality traits, a characteristic stage of development, as well as a bad adjustment at school.

The causes of delinquency are therefore multiple; hence any realistic program for its prevention should involve an attack along the entire community front. The school is directly related to only one phase of the problem but it might well lead the remainder of the community in the attack. . . .

Admittedly the school has the advantage of organization, assured financial support and personnel, while the community is a vague congeries of separate agencies, groups and neighborhoods so sprawling and disorganized as to defy effective mobilization. But the community contains a vast reserve of power and it is the task of the school to awaken the community to a knowledge of its power and the way in which it can be harnessed for the common good.

Discussion of the guidance of youth and prevention of juvenile delinquency has stressed the role of the school in organizing community resources. But the relations of the school and community are reciprocal. The requirements of the community have a bearing on the traditional and special functions of the school.

Consider first the use of the existing school plant. In most cases, school buildings are used from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon, from Monday to Saturday, and from September to the middle of June. During these periods the buildings are employed mainly for formal instruction. This practice is copious proof of the traditional policy to make the school an

educational capsule in society. It is no wonder that so many people regard education as a thing apart from the ordinary concerns of life.

Superior practice in the use of the school plant reveals why such a policy of isolation is a gross violation of the organic function of the school in the community. For example, in some towns and cities the recreational facilities of school buildings are open to children in summer, and to out-of-school youth and adults in winter, reducing the risk of street accidents, relieving the pressure of delinquency areas, and enriching the leisure time of all participants. . . .

Consider next the influence that a full recognition of the community might have on the architecture of school buildings. The school building would be planned to meet the educational needs of people from infancy to old age. . . . If school buildings and grounds could be constructed to serve a complete program of community education, a style of architecture would be created so functional as to make the physical property of the school a living symbol of the higher aspirations of people in the area served.

In another area of school policy the community has a contribution to make, namely that of relaxing the control which college entrance requirements exert over the curriculum of the school. For a long time this obstacle has blocked progress in the adaptation of the school to the needs of youth. The rehearsal of a few facts will emphasize the stake which the community has in this problem.

Probably not more than 15 per cent of young people of college age attend any institution of higher learning. The remaining 85 per cent terminate their education somewhere between the first and the twelfth grade. But the dominating influences determining the content of the high school curriculum are the courses demanded by the colleges as prerequisite for participation in their facilities. While it is not yet certain that the courses required by the colleges are the best ones for the prospective college student, our concern here is for the 85 per cent who enter life without the benefit of advanced training.

We are confronted therefore with the following anomalous situation: Institutions of higher learning receive more liberal financial support than any other segment of the educational hierarchy. From them we have a right to expect outstanding leadership not only for their own clientele but also for the public at large. But in spite of this obligation, for the most part, they obstruct the development of improvements in the curriculum especially of the secondary school which have long been overdue. The most effective resource in overcoming this incongruous obstruction permitted by institutions of higher learning resides in the community. For if the rank and file of Society could fully comprehend the fact that they are being shut off from an educational experience far more valuable and enriching than they can

now obtain, enough pressure would be exerted in the proper places to make an amicable adjustment of this educational bottleneck. In matters like this there is no authority greater than an aroused and intelligent public understanding. . . .

Two contrasting developments are appearing in American society. One is the startling tendency toward the centralization of economic and political power and the other is a less spectacular movement toward the decentralization of group activities. . . . Examples of indigenous demonstrations are surging up from the grass roots in thousands of localities throughout the nation giving new vitality to life on the home front. The aggregate effect of this movement is one of the most invigorating signs in a confused and seemingly futilitarian world. *The school is in the community.* It should accept this fact wholeheartedly. Thus it can lead the way in giving new promise to everyday life and produce the most effective answer by democracy to the challenge of totalitarianism.

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following clear expression of need for community identification with the school program is by J. H. Hull, Superintendent of Schools, Torrance, California. It is excerpted from an article in the August, 1953, issue of The School Executive.

An attitude of helping the community to solve and meet its educational problems as a participant in its thinking, but not as its superior member, is one which administration does well to cultivate. . . .

Community participation is basic in determining needs, formulating the program, and in developing the financing. Without it the program is a pre-determined concoction superimposed by the professional people. With participation, the program becomes the community's program, of which the citizens are proud and which they are willing to support. The fear-of-the-people bugaboo must have its source in the fact that some school people have something to hide.

Public relations is not selling education; not high-pressure tactics. . . . The selling idea is out, because it implies a prepared product. Education is not that and cannot be made to conform to a standardized pattern. Selling serves business well, but it serves education poorly. . . . Good public relations result from a sound organization, with a sound operating policy, sound philosophy and good communications, and not from tricks and devices.

With all the foregoing in mind, the professionals still have to keep before themselves the fact that the schools are the people's schools, not "our"

schools. The unconscious way in which the professionals get to talking about "their" schools reveals a vested-interest attitude that has no business in the picture. We (the professionals) are here to help the people have the kind of schools they want for their children. We are not here to sell them what kind of schools they must support for our benefit.

More power to the critics of the schools. They remind us that the schools were established to meet the purposes of American society; society does not exist to serve the schools. The schools are merely the extension of the home teaching by parents to meet the needs of a more technical social order. Let's open our eyes and indulge in a little self-criticism before we use the public relations program to defend what we are doing. Let the critics prove their points, if they can. In the process, we'll all benefit.

VALIDITY OF THE BASIC ARGUMENTS FOR CONSOLIDATION

By THEODORE A. GANTZ, *Superintendent of Schools*, Morrow County, Ohio

THE FIRST MAJOR ARGUMENT of state departments of education is "the trend toward consolidation." Trends do not establish validity. There are many trends today which are recognized as menaces to civilization: the tendency toward juvenile delinquency; the decline of the wholesome influence of the home; the decline in religion; the tendency of nations to move away from democracy and toward centralization or dictatorship in their various forms; all are trends which are open to question or are recognized as downright evils.

In the last case, the trend toward centralization and gradual transfer of individual responsibilities to superior central agencies is now embracing the public schools. In this specific case, at least, there is something that can be done to reverse an unwholesome trend. Through the newly developed and rapidly expanding techniques of community planning, community-school centers, laymen's advisory councils, and general participation by laymen of all levels in the school and community, individual responsibility is being returned to the citizen, and the citizen is assuming thereby his responsibility for planning and action for the welfare of his children.

In this connection, let us adopt the fundamental assumption that the whole child is going to school to the whole community. Therefore, every part of the community in which he dwells assumes importance in the molding of his life. All parts are drawn into the picture.

Consider the opposite picture—consolidation of independent school units so that local lay-responsibility may be stifled and control centralized in the

hands of one board. This generally takes place in a district so large that only the administrator is capable of seeing all the problems, and therefore is the only active planner and builder of the destinies of not only the pupils of school age, but also of the community itself. If the administrator is community-minded, and believes in involving laymen in policy-making, which is rare, the community-school ties may become potent factors in developing potentialities of both youth and adults. As a rule, however, he takes the position that the school will do well to remain aloof from community involvement; operates the program on the basis of clear-cut rules of established procedures, and resists those changes or innovations which demand departure from those set procedures.

There is, however, a counter-trend, namely: the awakening of laymen to the possibilities as participants in the planning and building of school-communities. From the remote, retarded fastness of backwoods mountain regions to neighborhoods within great metropolitan areas, this movement is growing. Its goals point toward the increase of local control of schools, local action, local planning.

The potent national organization of School Administrators made this the subject of their 1947 Yearbook. They took the position that the community school must be fostered and encouraged as the greatest forward step in the American social scene.

Progressive education calls for individualization of study, involvement of the whole community, broad-fields teaching, sweeping revision of traditional standards as to teacher specialization, class size, length and organization of class periods, and many other dynamic changes. The good small school program, free from arbitrary and inhibiting controls, is the best medium that has been devised for carrying out these progressive measures. Indeed, educators have proclaimed that it is in the small schools that the pioneering so essential to progress is being carried on. This medium is the target of those who propose and carry out sweeping school consolidation based upon criteria of size and other material items.

THE SECOND MAJOR ARGUMENT of the State departments is: "Consolidation is the most imperative next step in education." (Recommendations of agencies on various levels, local, county, state, and national, direct that consolidation be carried out first, and other improvements be attempted after, or with, the consolidation.)

In a meeting of the Great Lakes Conference on Rural Education, the values of the community-school program received broad and convincing approval. At this evidence of interest, a high state official pointed out: "Isn't it true that if we go along with the community-school movement, we will

thereby impede consolidation?" Inasmuch as he was acting as chairman in a summary of the conference deliberations, his question was allowed to hold as affirmatively answered, and consideration of the community-school movement was dropped from further discussion. In other words, the idea was suggested and autocratically adopted, that the schools existed in order to be consolidated, so to speak, and that improvement of communities within the status quo, although generally desirable and feasible, must take second place to consolidation.

It is only commented here that schools exist for the sake of people and not for the sake of consolidation or consolidators. Good schools ought not to be wiped out; all schools should be improved as they are, if possible; consolidation should be the last resort, rather than the first.

ANOTHER STATE DEPARTMENT ARGUMENT is: "The majority of the people want consolidation. This makes consolidation right in principle. Whether right or wrong, the majority rules and their wishes should rule."

It is beyond question that the main demand for consolidation is coming from areas other than those being consolidated or absorbed. To call the weight of agitators for consolidation in such case the majority is definitely to use a misnomer.

In those areas where it is apparent that consolidation receives the approval of the majority, such approval is generally based upon the advice of leaders without personal investigation by the group of the possibility of bias on the part of the leaders who have promoted such approval. As long as such approval consists of *acquiescence* in a program proposed by leaders without support of study and individual conviction based upon such study, such approval or acquiescence cannot be said to be the *will* of even *these* supposed majorities.

In the cases with which this writer is familiar, completely one-sided argument in favor of consolidation was used to secure decision and all questions pointing at revelation of the whole truth in the argument were repressed and discredited by various devices used for such purposes, and not reflecting very much credit upon the professional breadth, open-mindedness, and vision of the profession of which the discreditors are members.

The universities and colleges of Ohio are also guilty of onesidedness in this matter. It was found that not one of the research departments of our state universities would undertake a fair and searching study of the real issues in this most vital question. Not a small college in this great state has opened its doors to free and openminded discussion of this question, to the knowledge of this writer, with the exception of Hiram and Antioch Colleges. Their representatives have all gone over to a "position" in accord

with the policies of consolidation. Most of them, educational leaders though they are, are without even the scantiest solid knowledge of actual experimentation and successful demonstration of new techniques, even within their own state.

Any claimed preference for consolidation among teachers may be said to stem in part at least from the following:

1. Personal advantages to the teacher instead of challenge to great service.

2. Lack of knowledge, on the part of many teachers, of the real contribution they are making within the rural setting which they would not relinquish if they fully realized the extent of personal loss they would suffer in changing from personal rural teaching to city-type specialization and aloofness.

There are other pertinent considerations:

3. Much of the weight of opinion which is derisive of rural teaching comes from teachers who have not had rural experience.

4. Other teacher opinions of a hostile nature come from badly managed rural schools. Once again the point has to be made that leadership is the key, and until restrictions are removed so that effective techniques may be used by progressive administrators, we will continue to have futility where we could be having creativeness.

5. Money alone is obviously a very potent factor. It is suggested that equality of salaries for rural teachers would cause an immediate influx of teachers toward rural schools.

6. Money for other needs than salaries would create additional impetus toward rural teaching. Wholesome country air, cordiality of the rural environment, warm personal contacts with pupils, parents, and communities all would receive their full appreciation whenever financial limitations were reduced.

(Note here that there is no apology for isolationism of futile units. Only good rural schools, within sound limitations, as demonstrated by full opportunity to exploit the possibilities of the small school under progressive techniques and regulations, should be the pattern for state-wide action.)

7. As a rule articulate and ambitious recruits are picked up by city systems. The shy, unassuming, or quiet type of teacher is often found in the rural systems. As a result of this tendency, the articulate ones speak for the large cosmopolitan type of school; while those who do appreciate the advantages of rural teaching are seldom heard from, especially in places where opinion and policy are determined.

WHAT IS A GOOD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL LIKE?

The American public has been indoctrinated with the idea that the one-, two-, and three-teacher rural elementary school is outdated and educationally impoverished. Any remaining small schools are often regarded as a disgrace to a school system. Educational standards have called for at least one teacher for each grade. In some consolidated districts rural communities have been "scrambled" and family members dispersed in an effort to reach this standard by having one community's three-teacher school serve the first three grades, another three-teacher school in another neighborhood serve the next three grades, rather than that these teachers should teach all six grades in a small neighborhood.

The following article reprinted from the *NEA Journal* describes educational practice characteristic of many of our better small rural schools. Having taught in prominent progressive schools as well as having worked throughout a good county school system, we can testify that some of these small community schools reached standards of educational excellence and authenticity unmatched by the best we have seen in either private or large consolidated schools.

COMMUNITY HEADQUARTERS*

By HAZEL MOSS DUNCAN

Advance Mills is a small, seven-grade, one-teacher rural school. The children come from the usual type of farm homes—large families, small incomes, simple lives. I, as their teacher, know their patterns of living. I visit them often, worship with them, and attend their social gatherings. Thus, I am able to help the parents and children to plan the school program to meet the everyday needs of the children at school and families at home.

What are some of the practices we feel have resulted in a more practical program for improving inschool and outofschool living and learning?

Well, for one thing, we have a program flexible enough to allow the parents to come in and out of school freely. They can profit by our instruction and materials as well as assist the school with its many jobs.

They also help us with our planning. For example, in our School League, we had lengthy discussions of the things which the parents want the school to do for their children. The outcome was the formation of a school evaluation sheet, which is sent home for the parents to mark each month. Some of the things which the parents want the school to do for their children are: develop ideas of thrift, honesty, punctuality, obedience;

*Reprinted from *NEA Journal*, January 1951.

develop interest in home chores; develop kindness and thoughtfulness; develop concern for the rules of health.

The pupils made an evaluation sheet of their own, setting up personal goals for daily living at school. They included such things as accepting responsibilities, using materials wisely, exercising restraint, participation in planning, and accepting criticisms cheerfully.

The development of these two evaluation sheets has resulted in a closer knitting of home and school in efforts to educate the child. The evaluation sheets have helped the school to serve the community better and have aroused greater interest in the educational process.

By providing for parental participation, we have been able to set up an unusual and constructive guidance program. A convenient file box containing basic information and notes about each pupil is kept on my desk. Thus, we can easily have regular conferences at recess and during the noon lunch period. Pupils and parents drop in at those times to discuss their problems or ideas.

During one discussion with parents about guiding their youngsters, the parents pointed out that many young people wanted to go to the city. They did not appreciate country life and the opportunities it afforded. As a result of this conference, we decided to set up a program of appreciation of the great outdoors in our nature-study work.

We began to bring in specimens of caterpillars, butterflies, tadpoles, and other wild life. Then, came a need for a nature-study shelf. So a patron from a nearby sawmill gave us some lumber, and another patron built a long shelf on the sunny side of the room. This shelf has now been divided into four parts: a museum, an aquarium, a zoo, and a garden.

A craft program has also been set up using native materials, such as rushes, pine needles, corn husks, nuts, berries, and native clay, from which we make beads, mats, bowls, and other articles.

Interest in outdoor life has grown steadily, and the natural environment has provided a meaningful science workshop. This has made country life appear more interesting to the pupils, paved the way for more wholesome recreation, and fostered a deeper appreciation for the surroundings. We believe that our nature-study and native-craft programs are doing much to make the child realize that, after all, the country is a wonderful place.

An important emphasis in our school that developed through the give-and-take of parents, teachers, and pupils in these discussions is fostering of the sharing spirit. The children now are engaged in such activities as sharing toys, mittens, books and exchanging outgrown clothing. Toys are borrowed overnight or for the weekend. Some of these are home-made; some are made-over. They are often plain and crude, but they bring a great deal of

joy to the children. Since these children don't have many playthings at home, this activity is a real boon to their home play life.

The Adult Lending Library is another aspect of our sharing program. Books, magazines, and newspapers are lent to parents over night. Pupil librarians supervise this activity, using a card file system.

Much of this material is obtained from friends. We get left-over newspapers from the news boys of the nearby town. A small reference library, including a new set of encyclopedias purchased cooperatively by patrons and county, is available for use of the highschool pupils who attend school in another community.

The "help-one-another-hour" is really one of the high-spots in our daily program. At this time, pupils have an opportunity to work on their academic problems. There is the little boy who has speech difficulty. Two older children have learned to give him speech exercises and even speech tests. He thoroly enjoys the activity and responds to the older pupils as well as or better than to me. These "teachers" are proud of their responsibilities.

There is the second-grade girl who reads with particularly good expression and comprehension. The children enjoy hearing her read to them during this period. This activity answers a need which she possesses—an opportunity to use her talents.

Our school lunch program is a cooperative project, too. Each fall a card is circulated on which the parents list the items which they can contribute to the lunch program. Most parents put up canned goods especially for the school. Others donate potatoes, beans, peas, and other vegetables. Parents often bring large pies, cookies, puddings, cakes, or jello to school as a surprise for the children.

The children get a great deal of satisfaction out of serving things which they themselves helped to can or make. During a recent lunch period, a girl remarked, "Today, you are going to eat some of the tomatoes that Brother and I canned." Even though they may not have tasted any better than some of the others, the children remarked how good they were.

A portion of the cloak room has been converted into a kitchenette with a small oil stove donated by a patron, an old navy basin converted into a sink with an outlet, a cabinet for dishes, and a small table. A large lard tin is used as a sterilizer for the dishes. The pupils and parents have made pot-holders and aprons and repaired old utensils.

Grouping for special interests, abilities, and needs is an important characteristic of our school program. Grade levels exist only in the register.

Of course, it took a great deal of time and effort to prepare the parents for this type of program. Patrons' Days in the fall and spring—when parents spend the entire day at school—help them to realize how happily the chil-

dren work in groups where their needs are being met and how much more is accomplished.

The daily program of work provides for adequate drill in tool subjects. For example, a portion of the daily program gives special emphasis to speech problems. The speech of the rural child is often hesitant, inaudible, or muffled because he is shy and afraid of making mistakes. Furthermore, the type of speech that he hears in the home is not the best. Improvement of speech, which is an example of one of the real needs of our pupils, is taught in many ways. We have such activities as a mock radio-quiz program, a round-robin question and answer period, a good speech club, and language games. A local merchant says she can notice improvement in conversational speech on the part of the children. The children do not "freeze" in the presence of strangers now, and they seem at ease in welcoming visitors.

Reports of other improvements in our pupils come from the community. Yes, working closely with the community has helped us to serve the community and the pupils better. And it has earned for us the position of community headquarters.

BASIC ISSUES IN SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION

In studying school-community and school-reorganization policy we have repeatedly been impressed with the extent to which the public and educational administrators have come to assume that the small school (in contradiction to the small school district) is a thing of the past, and that responsible educators had generally turned to the large school as necessary to good teaching and economy. Review of the professional literature reveals no consensus on this subject.

As an example of contrasts, Butterworth and Dawson in *The Modern Rural School* write: "With reference to the standards for high schools, it is probable that the *desirable* size rather than the *absolute* minimum size should be between 700 and 1200 pupils." At the same time a survey of opinion of successful state-department-chosen superintendents and of educational specialists gave an average of about 500 as the optimum size. Nor is their figure one to take as authentic. The spread in estimates is indicative of confusion and lack of consensus. This study of opinion as to optimum school size was conducted by A. I. Oliver of the School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania and reported in the 1949 issue of *School and Society*. Mr. Oliver wrote: "The truth of the situation is that a huge school on clocklike routine and formality can be just as ineffective in wholesome development of the individual as the school traditionally characterized by a narrow convention, a limited social environment and inadequate teaching." We have many cases of rural high schools with between one and three hundred students doing superior work, yet many authorities advise

that "300 pupils is a minimum enrollment for effective operation of a high school."

In one county school system a leading authority had been called in to advise on the county school reorganization. The advice followed was to have a central consolidated high school of 1200 students. The county superintendent who had called in the authorities admitted that the nervous stress in such consolidated schools was severe and that he would prefer to have his own children in a smaller school where they would not be so lost in the crowd. Here is a problem in which specialists or authorities have been deferred to, which involves basic issues of values, decisions as to the trend and character of our national future.

The evidence and reasoning behind such policy is what we here concern ourselves with. For some of this reasoning we refer again to Butterworth and Dawson's influential volume, *The Modern Rural School*. In the chapter, "Education for Rural Children," seven desirable standards are listed, the second of them being: "It is desirable to have an elementary school with at least one teacher for each grade." A brief resume of this study interprets this as that "In six-year elementary schools 300 or more pupils are desirable."

This elementary school recommendation is qualified with the standard, "It is desirable that every clearly identifiable sociological neighborhood have an elementary school," "that each elementary school serves a neighborhood or small community center; and every community has a school."

While the transition is thus being made toward recognition of the community school, the large elementary school one-grade-per-teacher standard, and the high school 75-students-per-age-group standard are a denial of small community values for children as well as for the community. One wonders why the authors held onto these standards in view of their own recognition that:

In the traditional small rural elementary school the pattern of instructional organization has too often been a closely graded type with a specific time allotment to the subjects of each grade. This imitation of the city and other large-type graded elementary schools has been most inappropriate for small schools. Grades and subjects have never been important, except as means to a worthy end, but pupils and their needs and worthy life objectives are exceedingly important.

That the small school has an advantage in its close association of children in a smaller group of varied ages is given clear recognition in the Educational Administrators yearbook, *Schools in Small Communities*:

Small school systems give a greater opportunity for the mixing of pupils of different ages in the same classroom and on the same playground. The

pupils associate daily with boys and girls from kindergarten through the high school. Life in the small school thus resembles that of a family. Herein lie unique opportunities for the development of character, self-realization, and leadership, and a chance for pupil interests in the affairs of the whole school or whole community to develop unimpeded by cliques or class-consciousness.

With regard to the high school, the large school has seemed to be necessary because of the assumption that the school must supplant the family and community in their vocational, cultural, and other functions. The small high school class of twenty to fifty seniors is too small a world of association for students, the vocational interests of these students range too wide for even a large school to satisfy them, the personalities of the teachers are too few and limited in scope for good adult association, and the experiences, challenges, and viewpoints they have to encounter are too few. To try to compensate for this poverty by enlarging the school is like trying to improve a limited diet of potato and eggs by giving more varieties of potatoes and different colors of eggs.

In talking over the school reorganization problem with school administrators and others defending the lengths to which consolidation of schools is commonly carried, we have repeatedly found the main line of argument to be the contention that since the family and rural community have defaulted or are in the process of relinquishing their traditional major role as educators of children, it has become necessary to institutionalize the child-rearing and vocational functions as professional concerns of a large highly specialized school staff.

There is enough truth in that argument to make persuasive the lengths to which home and community are being displaced by the schools, but there is growing recognition that it is a half-truth which allows schools to extend in size and in function until they leave little room for small community or family to play their part even when they would. The family and the primary-group community are having great difficulty in the transition from the old to the new economy. The cure for that difficulty is not in helping to kill them both through enlarging and centralizing the power of centralized government in education, but rather in stimulating life and activity in family and community.

We will here attempt to summarize the problems and handicaps of consolidating elementary or high schools out of local communities—communities from 200 to 4000 in population—into schools with the recommended minimum of 300 elementary students and 300 to 1500 high school students. In the first place, the life of the community is often sacrificed by consolidation. Second, we have no assurance that the vaunted facilities and

personnel of schools of from 300 to 2000 enrollment offset the harmful educational and psychological effects of bringing the child into the large mass of children. There is evidence that the moderately small school has educational advantages arising alone from smallness. It has only been assumed that a larger and more specialized staff would do a better job. Such unproved assumptions are valid only as provisional hypotheses for experiment, not as a basis for uniform national policy.

Third, not only the small community, but family well-being is at stake in consolidation of schools out of the local community. There is evidence that it is the intermingling of children on a small-community level that most brings adults into association with each other and out of their demoralizing social isolation. This socializing role of children in the community may be irreplaceable.

Fourth, the mental and nervous health of children is adversely affected by the nervous stress and impersonalism of large schools. We know that effective small community relationships and small groups are necessary to personal security and mental health. We have scarcely started to apply this knowledge to our dealing with children. Some educators have come to believe, from this standpoint, that sixty is as *large* as a primary school should be, in contrast to the 200 *minimum* urged by other educational authorities. The anthropologist Weston La Barre, speaking before the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, said, "The most important thing in human cultural behavior is . . . the way we bring up our children. And the most important thing ultimately in the politics of the world is the kind of human being, temperamentally, that we manufacture. . . . If we find it expedient to insist that man is an individualistic monad organically and culturally, then let us cease to wonder that we continue to fill our mental hospitals with this kind of individual, whose very interpersonal humanity has been interfered with."

A fifth major reason for avoiding large school consolidations is the loss in them of ethical and moral tone and standards, of the informal social control that the small community has heretofore universally supplied. Just as the mass relationships of the army in removing boys from oversight of neighbors and home folks have commonly resulted in breakdown of sexual morality, so there is taking place a similar moral breakdown in some of our large schools consolidated away from home and community. In the long run this may be an unavoidable trend in large schools, for distinctive ethical and cultural standards are the product of the informal social control of small community relationships among all ages; the pressure of intimate person-to-person acquaintance and oversight. The younger the child the greater is the need for a smaller social world for personal attention, security and cultural standards. By and large, teachers are unable to control the

social world of large masses of youth. Youth become a lawlessness unto themselves. The importance of this factor of small community social control is so great that the Yale sociologist, George P. Murdock, wrote of it:

Sociological analysis can advance only if we segregate towns and cities as a fundamentally distinct category from the universal phenomenon of the small local community with its maximal population of not much more than a thousand. The most significant fact about the community as thus defined and restricted is that it is the group within which informal mechanisms of social control operate with genuine effectiveness.

Sixth, the coercion by which consolidation frequently is carried on violates the fundamental principles of democracy, of adult education and of community organization. The case study of Hocking County, Ohio, printed elsewhere in this issue, is representative of the pressure in many other states as well.

Against these major hazards of large school-consolidations there lies the claim of economy. The evidence is that it is the small district and inadequate number of pupils per teacher that are expensive, not the small school. By and large state authorities have sought to undermine rather than build up small school programs and policy.

The consolidation policies of state departments of education are commonly irrevocable in their effort. A million-dollar bond fund, the sale of local school buildings, the abandonment of a village school, cannot be quickly undone, and leave their consequences upon generations to come. To force wholesale change in the face of the disapproval of competent sociologists, citizenship opposition, and of divided counsel on the part of educational administrators, would appear to be on the order of professional malpractice.

The foregoing is not an argument against appropriate school reorganization and consolidation, but against its wholesale application, against extremes of consolidation, and against action in the face of community opposition. The necessity for school reorganization is inescapable. As David Lindstrom has shown is true of Illinois (in the Nov.-Dec., 1952 issue of *Community Service News*), the public is in favor of consolidation to provide around 150 students for high school.

Good administrative policy would carefully avoid standardization in areas that are in doubt or dispute, allowing freedom and initiative, where at all possible. Some neighborhoods have done well in maintaining one-, two-, and three-teacher schools for the first three to six grades. There should not be any blanket elimination of these community-building schools such as has been urged upon the public during the past few decades.

SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION POLICY IN MASSACHUSETTS

A clear example of orthodox school consolidation is described in the publication *Planning One Town*, by John D. Black and Ayers Brinser, economists of Harvard University (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1952, 75 pages). The study is devoted to the town of Petersham, Massachusetts, and incidentally describes recommendations of the Massachusetts State Board of Education for the amalgamation of six towns into one joint regional school district.

Here we have on hand three of the factors in school reorganization policy that so deeply threaten the integrity of the community (as contrasted with the impersonal urban-scale region). First is the factor of coercion by control of financial benefits. Local school boards fear to improve local schools lest the money they invest will soon be lost through an enforced consolidation. Second, we find two communities at the upper limit of primary-group community size, each with high schools which may be as large as a good high school should be, yet the plan is to consolidate them and others into an impersonal regional population of 12,000 people and enlarging with time from a beginning of about 750 in the high school. Third, we find the usual attribution of ulterior motives to those who oppose consolidation. Excerpts from the report follow:

Typical of state departments, the Massachusetts state board "gives larger state aid for new regional buildings than for the construction of local schools."

"The following outline describes a so-called regional high school for the towns of Barre, Hardwick, Hubbardston, Petersham, Phillipston, and Templeton. Under this plan, one new high school is to be built immediately to serve all the high school students in these six towns. The pertinent data concerning these towns are as follows:

Town	Population	High-School Enrollment
	1945	1948
Barre	3,485	260*
Hardwick	2,115	77
Hubbardston	1,019	66*
Petersham	735	29
Phillipston	475	19*
Templeton	4,435	296
	<hr/> 12,264	<hr/> 747

*Grades 7-12. Other high schools 9-12.

"These six towns now have four high schools. . . . The expenditures per high-school pupil of these six towns in a recent year were as follows: Barre, \$208; Hardwick, \$324; Hubbardston, \$285; Petersham, \$533; Phillipston, \$237; Templeton, \$175." The regional school was expected to cost \$226 per pupil.

"The choice of location suggested for the new building is near the center of the towns on a main highway north of Barre. A building designed for 800 pupils, according to the building standards of the New York State Department of Education, would cost \$1,590,000. Of this, \$825,000 or 65 per cent, would be paid by the State. . . .

"Of interest in this connection is the fact that three of the towns are now voluntarily organized in one school superintendency. Hubbardston, Phillipston, and Templeton are part of another school superintendency. School superintendents sometimes oppose the formation of regional school units, probably because it may terminate some of their positions. One superintendent under such circumstances wrote as follows: 'Such efforts should be resisted because I do not believe them to be in the interests of the town,' and because the families in his superintendency 'know one another and trust one another,' and this would no longer be true if new towns were brought in."

REPORT OF THE TENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON THE SMALL COMMUNITY, June 29-July 1, 1953

Subject: "The Lonely Crowd vs. Community"—A Study of Intensive Fellowship Groups and of School Reorganization as Examples of Need for Maintaining Small Community Values in the Modern World.

This year's conference was a gathering of around 75 people, with a wide variety of backgrounds and outlooks, seeking to find light on one of the most controversial problems of today. When the conference members had finished their discussion they drew up conclusions on which they had agreement, among which the following is part:

"Purpose of Education. The purpose of education and of schooling should not be left as posed by school men. Education is primarily a function of the community of which the school is part. The purpose of the school is the business of the community, including the school people, not of school men alone. The community to be educationally active and effective must formulate and continually recreate its own values and purposes. This must involve all in the community—working together.

"Sharing and Mutuality. We believe that a primary need in the education and school problem is to recognize and give opportunity for every person, child and adult, to develop his own self-respecting part in school and community. The teacher needs to be accepted in the community, and he in turn needs to respect and accept the part of the parent if the parent is to feel at home in school concerns.

"Education must be a community endeavor from birth to death. For all in the community are involved."

Conference talks and discussion were spicy and highlighted with many quotable statements and remarks.

In the talks on fellowship or friendship groups, Arthur Morgan led by telling how likeminded small groups of congenial people are not only a foundation of social relationships generally, but are a major source of new and significant developments in society. In the subsequent small group discussion much need was felt for clarifying understanding about the intimate, universally experienced small group relationship and its potentialities.

In answer to the question, "What really is our concept of a fellowship group?" it was developed that "These voluntary, spontaneous groups are a deep-seated characteristic of society. Community is a complex thing, not a monolithic structure. Everyone needs groups for security, just as he needs a family. Some groups may be very poor in quality; just as some families are. But as are the families and fellowship groups, so is society.

"Much time was spent in pondering: How do we raise the level of interest and purpose in some fellowship groups that meet on the bridge, or rug-hooking level?

"A sociologist described his group of professional intimates who meet once a month to talk over mutual interests. Everyone led; there was no distinguishable leader. This kind of fellowship had real impact on society."

William McKinley Robinson's two addresses on school reorganization were striking and stimulated much discussion. He described how initially small one-room schools were remarkably efficient, not because of one room and one teacher, or because of the attention given the three R's, "but its success was due rather to the hold it had on the community" that created it. He then told how rural schools had *for a time* fallen behind urban schools in fulfilling their distinctive destiny, and went on to tell how

The immediately proposed solution, and the one which still seems most logical to those who have but a superficial awareness of rural life and rural education, was to ape the city schools. That the rural school had at its command a laboratory of social and physical phenomena available to urban schools only at prohibitive cost or effort, that the uniform textbooks were written by urban teachers for children of urban backgrounds and needs, were of little or no consequence. Rural schools must have the same equip-

ment and books as urban schools. That the large numbers of children made grading the only feasible organization for urban schools, while there were educational advantages inherent in cross-age grouping of children, at least in the first six grades, likewise fell upon deaf ears.

The chief forms of motivation for bringing rural schools up to urban standards, both within the profession generally and by the public, have been pity, ridicule, indifference and bribery, this latter in the form of state aid used as an incentive, paying transportation costs, for example. In comparing rural and urban schools, the former were and are always described at their worst and the latter at their best. All this has so lowered the prestige of the rural school as to abet the urban schools in their unconscionable looking upon the rural schools as the proving ground of the profession.

All of us have been told that urban schools are superior to rural schools generally. How many know that the rural teachers of today have reached the level of professional preparation and tenure of the urban teachers of fifteen years ago, a more remarkable rate of progress than that made by urban teachers in the same period? How many know that of the high school age group, 79% of the rural farm group and 82% of the rural non-farm group are in school, as compared with 87.5% of the urban group, and that in spite of the fact that rural data include a disproportionate share of the disadvantaged groups—Negroes, Indians, Spanish-Americans and migrants. Even more surprising figures are those that show that of the total group 5 to 24 years of age, the rural farm group has 63% in school as compared to the 60% of both the rural non-farm and urban groups, and that in spite of the very few kindergartens to be found in rural schools. How many know that in a recent national exhibit of postwar school buildings, rural schools more than held their own in numbers and beauty, as well as functionalism?

But the main interest we have in rural schools is in their relationship to their communities. It was during this period of looking to the urban school, not as a *pace setter*, but as a *pattern setter*, that the schools and communities drifted farthest apart. The concern was with the schools as entities in themselves, with purposes of their own, rather than as integral parts of the community. . . .

From the child-centered school we have now moved to the community-centered school. The 1953 yearbook of the National Society on the Study of Education is on *The Community School* . . .

As of today we have moved from the consolidated school concept to that of the reorganized school district with its provision for attendance units within the administrative unit. More and more are coming to believe that any neighborhood with a significant sense of identity and unity should have an elementary school of at least the first six grades. We have as of this day moved from the child-centered concept to that of the community-centered school, in terminology possibly more than in fact.

As for the morrow, we can hope that we shall gain in understanding and appreciation of the interrelatedness of school and community, in under-

standing and appreciation of the interrelatedness of a sense of community and a sense of individual worth, and in understanding and appreciation of the education gained by life itself in a community small enough for whole persons consciously to share in whole communities.

Dr. Ramseyer of Ohio State University made a plea for thinking free from prejudice. He said, "The educational program that is to be built for the community is not now defined. We mustn't think we *know* what the educational program should be. Educators must be very humble. School and home should get together and define what is family and community. It is education that should be emphasized, not schooling. Any separate agency has the child part of the time, but the community has him all of the time. It is a force working over and through the other agencies."

Mr. Gantz said that the lives of youth are more influenced by the adults with whom they come in contact than by any other agency. He pointed out that the great need of the modern community is to secure the teamwork of adults in educational, social, recreational, vocational and all manner of community projects. Through guided experience of this nature adults become the most able and devoted supporters of the best in educational activity for their children.

Dr. Robinson expressed his faith that when adults were so included, working, thinking, planning together, they were to be trusted to make reasonable decisions. Such decisions might not always conform to the thinking of educational specialists, but such "error" is not fatal, and people can take another step forward when their vision leads them to do so.

CONFERENCE STAFF

Wm. McKinley Robinson, Director, Rural Life and Education, Western Michigan College of Education, Kalamazoo.

W. B. Jones, Jr., American Program Director, Save the Children Federation, Knoxville, Tenn.

John Rinehart, Superintendent of Schools, Perrysburg, Ohio.

Andrew Wm. Halpin, Research Associate, Personnel Research Board, Ohio State University, Columbus.

Gordon Foster, President, Hamilton Township PTA, Warren Co., Ohio.

T. A. Gantz, Superintendent of Schools, Morrow County, Mt. Gilead, Ohio.

John Ramseyer, Director, School

Community Development Study, Ohio State University.

Hilda Hughes, Professor of Education and Director of Student Teaching, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

John E. Gee, Professor of Education, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio.

Arthur E. Morgan, President, Community Service, Inc.

Griscom Morgan, Editor, Community Service News.

Eleanor Switzer, Secretary, Community Service, Inc.

A list of others attending the conference was compiled for the use of conference members, and is available on request.

CORRESPONDENCE

The conference certainly was a worthwhile experience for us. Speaking for myself, I would say that I especially enjoyed Robinson's talks: the small group discussions; and the informal periods of just exchanging information.

The opportunity to meet so many people with a common interest in the small community, and yet with such diverse backgrounds, was certainly wonderful.

We plan to go ahead with our project of developing a small fellowship group here, but we may not be able to organize it before fall. This may be one way of providing continuity of interest in the small community.

—John Ludeman, Madison, Wis.

Greetings to you after several weeks of post-conference thought about our experience together in June. Although I find it impossible to agree with Mr. Robinson concerning the need for one-teacher high schools and the emphasis he gives reorganization, I can truthfully say that I found the conference very stimulating and a very worthwhile experience.

It seems to me that stress should be placed upon the fight for better schools, regardless of size. Robinson seems to ignore the welfare of greater society and its demands as it impinges upon the smaller community and the individual. The whole societal picture as emphasized by Dewey, Bode, and Kilpatrick cannot be overlooked.

—John Rinehart, Perrysburg, Ohio

From our reply:

We valued the good letter you wrote about the conference on school and community.

There were a couple of points in your letter that arose from a misunderstanding. First is your statement, "I find it impossible to agree with Mr. Robinson concerning the need for one-teacher high schools." Mention of one-teacher high schools came, as I remember, from Royce Pitkin, who said that he had attended a one-teacher high school and thought it better than some large high schools, not because it was small, but because the quality of faculty is more important than the curriculum. The conference discussion was whether a one-teacher school with a fine courageous man leading the students would be preferable to a large school with slavish mediocrities for teachers. That is no argument for a one-teacher school, any more than it would be an argument for a large school to say that some small schools have poor facilities.

The second point of misunderstanding is your belief that Robinson ignores the welfare of the greater society, as pictured by Dewey, Bode, and Kilpatrick. To the contrary, Robinson sees the child's relation to the small community as the prototype and starting point of his relation to the larger society. So did Dewey. In the last pages of Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* he makes just that point, as does Maurice Seay, head of the Department of Education at the University of Chicago.

Concern for the small community is imperative for the education profession because the school is the heart of the community, and the community is also education. We are not warranted in assuming that we can limit our concern to having good schools. —G. M.

The local unit as a natural area of public opinion cannot be dispensed with if we are to maintain representative democracy; without it we have a government of the crowd, a pure democracy with the demos in apparent control, but really manipulated by the few.—DWIGHT SANDERSON

Articles on school reorganization and school-community relationships in previous issues of Community Service News:

"School Consolidation—A Process Calling for Social as Well as Educational Insight," May-June, 1953.

"The Small Community and School Reorganization," Nov.-Dec., 1952.

"Social Services and Community Boundaries," by Arthur E. Morgan, May-June, 1948. This article deals with schools and school districts, quoting from outstanding rural sociologists such as Dwight Sanderson, and Eugene T. Stromberg and D. E. Lindstrom, forming tentative conclusions with regard to other community services.

"Community Considerations in School Consolidation," quoting from Dwight Sanderson's *Rural Sociology and Rural Social Organization*, Nov.-Dec., 1950. Also in this issue, "Right Where You Are," by Zelia Walters, description of an unusually fine small school—"There is a small village in this favored land where the children cry if they cannot go to school. . . ."

These issues are available for 35¢ per copy or four for \$1.00; send order to Community Service, Inc., Yellow Springs, Ohio. Postage stamps are acceptable.

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

Sept. 17-19, Natl. Conf. on Citizenship, Hotel Statler, Washington, D.C.

Sept. 21-24, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 31st Annual Meeting, Gethsemane Retreat House, 72nd and Euclid, Kansas City, Mo. For reservations write Rev. John F. Huhmann, 3142 Broadway, Kansas City 2, Mo.

Oct. 6-8, Annual Conference, American Country Life Assn., Memorial Union, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa. Theme "Getting Action to Meet Community Needs." Speakers: Dean Floyd Andre, J. C. Penney, Roger B. Corbett, Paul C. Johnson, Ralph S. Yohe, J. J. Wallace, and others.

Dec. 2-5, Am. Public Welfare Assn., Annual Round Table Conference, Chicago.

Dec. 4-5, Rural Life Assn. and Peace Churches, 12th Annual Conference, Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind. Planned jointly with Manchester Coll. Rural Life Program. Theme "The Community," sessions on Rural Church, Health, Conservation, Rural School. Leaders: James Wyker, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. McKinley Robinson, Rev. Wm. Stauffer, Rev. Leo R. Ward, Rev. Ed. K. Ziegler, E. L. Kirkpatrick, Rev. E. W. Mueller, Rev. Lonnie Haas.

(For fuller list of regional and national meetings in the field of public administration, welfare, etc., write Public Administration Clearing House, 1313 E. 60th St., Chicago 37, Ill.

NEWS NOTES

Arthur E. Morgan, President of Community Service, Inc., has been appointed by the government of the Gold Coast as consultant on its Volta River Project, involving power development, mining, railroad and other building. Mr. and Mrs. Morgan will leave for the

Gold Coast October 19, to spend several weeks there. They plan to spend a few days in London en route.

The Board of Trustees of Community Service, Inc., will hold its fall meeting at Yellow Springs, Ohio, on October 12.